SECRET

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Why Spy?

The Psychology of Espionage (U)

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I said once that the men that I betrayed had taken or made similar choices and taken similar chances. Any reasonable person hearing me say that is going to say "what arrogance." But that was not an arrogant statement. What I did to those men—the situation of their families and others—and the kind of shame and the kind of remorse I feel—this is, and I think will always be, intensely personal.

— CIA mole Aldrich "Rick" Ames² (U)

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People who commit espionage sustain a double life. When a person passes classified information to an enemy, he or she initiates a clandestine second identity. From that time on, a separation must be maintained between the person's secret "spy" identity, with its clandestine activities and the "non-spy" public self. The covert activities inescapably exert a powerful influence on the person's overt life. They necessitate ongoing efforts at concealment, compartmentation, and deception of those not witting of the espionage, which includes almost everyone in the spy's life. For some people, sustaining such a double identity is exciting and desirable; for others, it is draining and stressful. For a few heroic people, spying is a moral imperative that they would prefer to avoid but feel compelled to act on. (b)(3)(n)

This article focuses on spies whose espionage appears to be primarily self-interested, rather than altruistic or self-sacrificing. Within this criminal or treasonous type, specific psychological factors

commonly occur, providing a guide to understanding the motives, behavior, and experiences of this type of spy. The risk of espionage can be reduced through understanding these psychological patterns and tailoring countermeasures. (U)

Elements of Espionage (U)

Three essential elements set the conditions for espionage: dysfunctions in the personality, a state of crisis, and ease of opportunity. The converse is true as well: Safeguards or strengths in these areas mitigate the risk of espionage. (U)

Any consideration of motivation in espionage must closely examine personality pathology. Personality is the mix of traits, attitudes, and values that characterizes a person. Spies frequently have pathological personality features that pave the way to espionage, such as thrill seeking, a sense of entitlement, or a desire for power and control. In addition, healthy countervailing traits—such as a ce^{2m} temperament or strong sense of responsibility—may be either weak or entirely absent.4

A second essential motivator is the spy's experience of an acute personal crisis resulting in intense distress. Though the spy may have regrets in hindsight, at the time he or she initiates the espionage, it appears a logical decision to solve a problem or the only option available to escape a desperate or painful situation(b)(3)(n)

The factors of "personality," "crisis," and "opportunity" do not operate independently. Vulnerabilities in one area generate vulnerabilities in the others. A person with a problematic mix of personality features will tend to have more than the average number of life crises, including job terminations, relationship or family problems, and financial troubles. Such personal crises will, in turn, further stress and magnify problematic traits and behaviors just when the person needs most to function with stability and maturity. Unscrupulous agents "spotting" a vulnerable person may insinuate themselves into the situation and find ways to exacerbate the personal crisis, "ripening" the targeted person's vulnerability to recruitment. Handlers will then continue to manipulate a recruited asset's vulnerabilities to maintain the person's long-term commitment to espionage. (b)(3)(n)

The descriptive categories that follow are useful as a map of what to expect on the psychological terrain of espionage. As with all maps, however, they oversimplify. No typology can encompass the full complexity of the psyche of any individual spy. Moreover, a proportion of people caught in criminally oriented or self-serving espionage will not fit the predicted patterns. Therefore, the typology must be applied with caution. Trained professionals can apply these concepts to mitigate risk in contexts such as applicant screenings and evaluations for clearances. Managers and other members of the Intelligence Community may use this information to sharpen their awareness of potentially risky behavior patterns. They should bear in mind, however, that these psychological patterns do not always lead to trouble . . . and that many troubled people do not exhibit these patterns. (U)

Psychopathy (U)

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My initial intention had been to stop. Having done the scam, having gotten the \$50,000, then I would stop. My intent had been to stop, and leave it at that. What brought me to do it . . . to pass all that information, was partly a matter of self-preservation. Two of the names I gave were KGB officers serving in the Washington Residency.

—CIA mole Rick Ames $\frac{8}{}$ (U)

Psychopaths are predators, approaching life with remorselessness, manipulation, pursuit of risk and excitement, and sharp, short-term tactical abilities alongside poor long-term/strategic planning. They frequently leave people with a positive first impression. Over time and with extended exposure, the initial impression wears away as people become aware of, or are directly victimized by, the psychopath. Before they are unmasked, psychopaths can cause severe damage to individuals and institutions. (U)

Psychopaths cannot consistently follow laws, rules, and customs, and do not understand the social necessity of doing so. They have limited capacity to experience the feelings of guilt, shame, and remorse that are the building blocks of mature conscience and moral functioning. They are facile liars. In fact, many psychopaths take inordinate pleasure in lying because perpetrating an effective "con" gives them a sense of power and control over the person lied to, an emotional charge sometimes termed "duping delight." Their glee in manipulating others may be so acute that it overrides their judgment and good sense, causing them to take foolish risks simply for the pleasure of temporarily "conning" others. (U)

Psychopaths are interpersonally exploitative. The condition is not infrequently associated with acute cruelty and the enjoyment of inflicting pain on others. Harming or alarming others is, to psychopaths, its own reward. They pursue these pleasures with relish irrespective of the risks involved or the limited potential for gain. (U)

Finally, psychopaths rarely learn from mistakes and have difficulty seeing beyond the present. Consequently, they have deficient long-term planning and their judgment is weak. In contrast to their problems in strategic planning, however, psychopaths can be supremely skilled tacticians and exceptionally quick on their feet. Absent the usual prohibition against violating rules or social customs, psychopaths are tactically unbound and remarkably uninhibited. (U)

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Snakes in Suits (U)

In the workplace, psychopaths are noteworthy for their central role in frequent, enduring, and bitter conflicts. Psychopaths exert themselves to charm select superiors, whereas their immediate workplace peers experience their abuse and quickly come to view them with mistrust. Peers see them as possessing a guilt-free lack of integrity, as remorseless in pursuit of their own agendas, and as ruthlessly eliminating critics or obstacles—even legitimate competitors—who present a threat. Subordinates of psychopaths most often fear them. A great deal of resolve and courage is required to publicly take on psychopaths, because of their ruthlessness, manipulative acumen, and the thrill and excitement they experience at generating stress and conflict. (U)

Those in the bureaucracy responsible for oversight or disciplinary functions—such as security or finance officers—will frequently be the first targets of psychopathic manipulations. These institutional disciplinarians are often in a position to collect hard data against the psychopath, such as fraudulent accountings or inaccurate time-and-attendance records; therefore, they present an especially acute threat to a psychopath's freedom to maneuver undetected within a bureaucracy. They often are subjected to vicious attacks instigated by the psychopath, which may take personal rather than professional form. These pre-emptive strikes serve to obstruct or obscure legitimate efforts to bring to light concerns about the psychopath's integrity and behavior. In addition, if a psychopath's immediate supervisor, peers, or subordinates try to feed some of their concerns upward to management, they often find that the psychopath has been there before them and preventatively "groomed" key managers to expect such criticism. The warnings, therefore, fall on deaf ears or result in blowback to the messengers. (U)

Because psychopaths thrive in an atmosphere of turbulence and instability, corporate cultures that tolerate risk-taking and controversial or even abusive behaviors will provide congenial ground for them. Organizations where the usual institutional systems of control or supervision are weak—such as those with inadequate personnel measurement and tracking systems or with vulnerable information systems—will be particularly unprotected against psychopathic manipulations. (U)

The Intelligence Community has both more protection from and also more vulnerability to deliberate manipulation by insiders. The institutional safeguards are greater than in most workplaces because of rigorous medical and security screenings of applicants, regular security reviews of the workforce, and programs for medical and lifestyle support for troubled employees. These unique institutional controls are essential because the Intelligence Community's compartmentation of information, secrecy regarding programs and activities, and constant mobility of personnel make it relatively easy for unscrupulous employees to maneuver undetected and to manipulate the system. In the national security environment, such behaviors have the potential to do especially grave harm.

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Narcissism (U)

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Yes, and there were Kapos, too, during the concentration camps.

—Navy civilian analyst Jay Pollard <u>11(</u>U)

Narcissistic personalities are characterized by exaggerated self-love and self-centeredness. Alongside an all-encompassing grandiosity runs a subtle but equally pervasive insecurity, into which narcissists have limited insight. Their internal world typically is built around fantasies about their remarkable personal abilities, charisma, beauty, and prospects. They are compelled to exhibit their presumed stellar attributes and constantly seek affirmation from others. Though their imaginings distort common sense or everyday reality, narcissists nevertheless believe in the accuracy of their daydreams and act accordingly. Others, therefore, often experience them as lacking common sense and twisting reality. When facts or other people contradict or interfere with their fantasies, narcissists become combative and vengeful. Their defensive hostility to criticism—even mild feedback—is often well out of proportion to whatever provocation sparked it. (b)(3)(n)

Narcissists possess a careless disregard for personal integrity and can be very unscrupulous and manipulative in pursuing their own ends. They are, on the whole, indifferent to the needs of others and are frequently experienced by others as having flawed social consciences. They feel entitled to special—even extraordinary—favors and status that they do not believe they have to reciprocate. They heedlessly exploit others emotionally and financially, or in other ways that suit their ends. They are deeply antagonistic to sharing decisionmaking with others, irrespective of the legitimacy of the claims of others for some degree of control. Convinced of their own inherent superiority, they blame others for their problems or for negative events that happen to them, including social

rejection. Because they do not consider themselves at fault for any troubles or setbacks, narcissists feel at liberty to take whatever steps they deem necessary to redress wrongs or regain a sense of mastery and superiority. (U)

Narcissistic self-absorption should not be confused with an inability to grasp the perspective of others. Their hunger for affirmation produces acute awareness of the reactions they are provoking from the people around them. This deep hunger for affirmation also makes them vulnerable to manipulation, particularly by people whose admiration or approval they desire. Narcissists are particularly sensitive to authorities or to otherwise socially prominent or powerful people. Conversely, they can be inordinately indifferent to or contemptuous of the feelings or needs of people whom they believe to be insignificant or social inferiors. (U)

Narcissists in the Workplace (U)

Narcissists are often magnetic because their supreme self-confidence wedded to their urgent drive to impress enables them to project the appearance of talent and charm effectively. Over time, the charisma wears thin as it becomes evident that this appearance is not built on substance, but rather on fantasies and fabrications. Furthermore, narcissists' pervasive tendency to see others as inferior causes them to be needlessly sarcastic, belittling, or supercilious. People around them may note a stark contrast in the narcissist's conduct towards different classes of people depending on their social rank and usefulness. Furthermore, the hostile and vindictive attacks meted out by narcissists when others challenge their grandiosity tend to provoke angry responses in return. The result is that narcissists frequently find themselves the recipients of antagonistic feelings at distinct odds with their view of themselves as infinitely superior and admirable. They have limited insight into their role in these dynamics and tend to blame others for their own lack of social success, in the workplace as elsewhere. Their managers will frequently have to intervene in the interpersonal conflicts they habitually generate. (U)

In addition, narcissists often show a pattern of organizational rule violations and disregard for institutional or managerial authority. They trivialize inconvenient regulations or hold themselves superior and exempt from policies, directives, and laws. They feel entitled to favorable workplace treatment—whether this comes in the form of forgiveness for transgressions, early or frequent promotions, attractive work assignments, or other advantages such as having their requests expedited by support staff. They are acutely sensitive to the advancement of others and become suspicious and angry if they experience themselves as being left behind. They perceive workplace competitors who get ahead of them as "stealing" advantages or rewards that are rightfully their own. Finally, narcissists will lie, fabricate information or events, willfully exaggerate accomplishments, and often believe their own fabrications, all in the interest of appearing successful or important. (U)

Many of these characteristics, properly contained, can be very useful in certain types of work requiring flexibility, charisma, and persuasion—for example, in sales, politics, and operations officer work. It can be very difficult for managers to know where to draw the line between a tolerable or useful level of narcissism and more dangerous self-absorption and self-aggrandizement. One way to make this determination is to look for positive counterbalancing features in the personality that control the narcissism. (U)

Immaturity (U)

Observers frequently compare immature adults to adolescents. Attitudes and behaviors that are expected and even endearing in normal adolescents or children, however, are unsettling, disruptive, and potentially hazardous in adults. (U)

The most salient characteristic of immaturity is the ascendancy of fantasy over reality. 14 Immature adults spend an inordinate amount of time daydreaming, deliberately calling to mind ideas that stimulate pleasant or exciting emotions. In contrast to mature adults, immature adults do not readily distinguish their private world from objective external reality and, in fact, may expect reality to conform to their self-serving and stimulating fantasies. Their fantasies about their special powers, talents, status, prospects, and future actions can be so seductive that they become resentful of conflicting real-world truth. (U)

Immature persons generally expect others to embrace what to them is the self-evident legitimacy of their personal ideas and longings. They often cannot understand why others do not share their perspective and fail to see that reality itself works against the validity of their fantasies. They frequently will act on their fantasies with little anticipation of consequences that to most people would be completely predictable. They are often genuinely shocked when reality intrudes on their plans and interferes with anticipated outcomes. Because they are persistently egocentric, immature people see themselves as the epicenter of any crowd or event. They believe others are paying close attention to them personally in most contexts, and as a result they are acutely self-aware. When it becomes clear that they are not the center of attention, and that others might, in fact, be indifferent to them, they often react negatively and take steps to bring attention to themselves. (U)

Immature people have difficulty moderating their feelings. Rather than appropriately disciplining and channeling feelings, they are subject to them. As a result, they are given to dramatic displays of emotion when stressed or excited, and while these displays may be congruent to whatever stimulated the feelings—for example, they will become very angry at perceived injustices or delighted at successes—observers will sense that the emotions lack proper proportion and moderation. (U)

A significant consequence of poor emotional control is impulsivity. Immature people have difficulty restraining their immediate wishes in the interest of anticipating long-term consequences. When prompted by sudden feelings or urgent desires, they take precipitous action. They tend to have limited attention spans and need to be emotionally engaged with a task or a person to retain focus. They are easily bored with routine and can be quite fickle and distractible. (U)

Finally, like psychopaths and narcissists, immature persons have defective consciences, but they are capable of feeling real guilt and often have well-developed moral codes. Their egocentricism and impulsivity limit their capacity for foresight, but in hindsight they often deeply regret their impetuous actions. Though they may want to behave in an ethical manner and feel guilt and shame when they behave badly or hurt other people, their capacity to apply their moral understanding and desires consistently is compromised. (U)

An occasional feature of immaturity is dependency, which is highly relevant to espionage because dependency makes a person particularly susceptible to manipulation and control. Dependent persons experience relationships to be so crucial to their well-being that they will do almost anything to sustain them. Dependent people may function quite adequately and seem well adjusted as long as they are not required to be on their own and are able to rely on a relationship as a psychological crutch. If the relationship is threatened, or there is even the possibility of separation, they become anxious and less able to cope. Their hunger to both please and cling to the person or people on whom they are dependent necessarily affects their judgment, and they will willingly compromise their own and others' well being-including their personal ethics-to sustain the relationship on which they depend. (U)

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Children at Play (U)

In the workplace, immature people are often spontaneous and imaginative and can be quite appealing. In optimal conditions, they can be productive and inventive people who are eager to form attachments with others and to please and impress them. (U)

When such employees are stressed, however, these characteristics can take distinctly negative turns. Spontaneity can translate into erratic and impulsive behavior, and active imaginations can cause problems with decisionmaking and judgment. If stress is not reduced, immature workers rapidly lose their ability to cope and can become inordinately needy and demanding. Co-workers who discern these patterns become alarmed, and immature persons are often considered by others to be somewhat unbalanced and a risk for hazardous behavior and bad judgment. (U)

In general, immature persons are naïve about normal expectations regarding adult workplace attitudes and conduct. They are too susceptible to environmental distractions and internal pressures to be consistent performers. They do not readily distinguish between personal and professional spheres. They are easily bored with routine and heedlessly seek stimulation from people and things around them. They can be either too dependent on, or reactive against, control mechanisms. They tend to be very demanding of positive attention from authorities, while at the same time overly hostile or sensitive to negative feedback. Their seeking after attention or

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stimulation often becomes a drain on supervisors, who must engage in constant oversight, and can deplete peers, who get pressed into fixing problems caused by their immature colleague's inattention and poor judgment. (U)

Mixed Personality Disorder (U)

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While the traits and behaviors of many spies match the features specific to psychopathy, narcissism, or immaturity and dependency, in some cases the personalities do not readily fit any one of these types. What may be most notable in such cases is a lack of positive personality features to counterbalance negative ones. In addition, some spies show a mix of characteristics from all three dominant types. Some may also show other psychopathologies such as paranoid or compulsive symptoms.

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Healthy Personalities (U)

In healthy personalities, positive characteristics counterbalance negative ones. Positive features might include the ability to accept criticism; feel remorse and make reparations for mistakes; show genuine empathy for at least some people; exhibit reasonable stability of mood over time and in different contexts; experience, express, and also contain, a wide range of emotions; show tactical adaptability alongside good long-range planning and self-discipline; and demonstrate ethical behavior across various situations. (U)

In contrast to exhibiting a mix of positive features to temper problem characteristics, pathological personalities tend to be structured around a few dominant, relatively uninhibited characteristics. The complexity of healthy personalities enables them to deploy an array of coping strategies depending on the nature of the challenges they have to address. In contrast, pathological personalities posses a limited range of coping techniques. People with personality pathology tend to adhere stubbornly to a few approaches to problem-solving and have difficulty adjusting, changing, and growing despite repeated evidence that their strategies for dealing with life are not working adequately. (U)

Precipitating Crises (U)

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My own decision in June [1986] to give them—to basically to volunteer to them the mass of genuine information that I had—is one that I still have trouble reconstructing. What I was thinking? How I was thinking? It was a very busy and stressful period both professionally and personally and it was like a leap in the dark.

—CIA mole Rick Ames 17 (U)

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While problematic personality features are essential, they are not sufficient to provoke espionage. The majority of people who have some, or even many, of the personality features described above will never engage in criminal conduct. Espionage must be triggered by a crisis and the person's assessment that illicit criminal conduct offers the solution to or an escape from the crisis. The precipitating crisis may be self-evident to observers—for example, the breakup of a marriage, the loss of a job, or bankruptcy. But it can also be private and invisible. Such psychological crises as feeling intensely frustrated and humiliated at being consistently outperformed at work by peers can be just as acute and painful as externally evident problems. (b)(3)(n)

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A well-trained espionage recruiter will search for vulnerable targets. Professional intelligence officers are trained to "spot" outward signs of trouble in a person's history or behavior—such as tumultuous relationships or frequent job changes—and to evaluate the deeper, more enduring psychological dysfunctions that may be at the root of the problems. These professional recruiters are trained to deploy sophisticated psychological control techniques matched to the vulnerabilities they have detected in order to manipulate, apply pressure, or induce a person to commit espionage. (b)(3)(n)

Some intelligence services do not limit themselves to exploiting pre-existing problems, but may actively foster crises to enhance the target's susceptibility to recruitment. Common forms of such aggressive pursuit and manipulation of targets include emotional or sexual entrapment and financial manipulation through increasing the target's level of debt. A psychologically vulnerable target's grandiosity, sense of being above the rules, or vengeful impulses can all be manipulated in the service of recruitment. (b)(3)(n)

The role of such manipulations by a potential customer and the prospective spy's own sense of the ease and safety of espionage are often underestimated as key factors in increasing or decreasing motivation. Adept professional handlers depict themselves not only as willing to reward espionage but also as capable of safeguarding their agent. Good professional "handling" is designed not only to collect classified information but also to stabilize and reassure the spy in the interest of sustaining his or her capacity to commit espionage for as long as possible. As a result, the relationship between an agent and a handler is frequently highly personal, intense, and emotional, at least from the perspective of the spy, and the nature of this relationship is often a powerful force behind an individual's choice to spy. (b)(3)(n)

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Remedies and Risk Management (U)

How people who have the potential to spy gain clearances and secure entry into the Intelligence Community; how they progress and function once inside; and how the risk they pose might be mitigated are questions of critical interest to security and counterintelligence personnel as well as to medical and management professionals. The risk of spying can be mitigated through programs designed to spot and address warning signs at each stage of an employee's career, and by providing support services to troubled employees once they have been identified or by disciplining them appropriately. (b)(3)(n)

The entry points into an organization can be safeguarded through rigorous security and psychological evaluations of applicants designed to spot and weed out chronically dysfunctional people unsuitable for clearances. Patterns of personality deficiencies that can result in trouble at both work and in personal lives not only attract the attention of trained observers of human behavior—such as psychologists and case officers—but also can be registered by more incidental observers, such as co-workers and neighbors. For this reason, background checks in the security clearances process are designed to tap into this informal reservoir of observations to identify maladaptive patterns that would put an intelligence organization at risk. (b)(3)(n)

While such medical and security screenings of applicants are the first line of defense, ongoing security reviews of the employee population are the second line, with the intent of detecting personnel who demonstrate patterns of troubling attitudes or behaviors and intervening before serious misconduct occurs. The typology of psychological factors in espionage presented here has been helpful in organizing observations regarding the personalities, behavior, and life circumstances of captured spies, with an eye to developing countermeasures and risk mitigation strategies applicable to the workplace. (b)(3)(n)

Routine security and CI reviews of applicants and staff should not be the only lines of defense, however, because while such reviews can pinpoint problems they do not necessarily ameliorate or fix them. Programs of education and support for the cleared workforce must supplement the safeguards provided by regular reviews. Educational programs regarding danger signs can assist employees and managers in spotting emotional or behavioral problems in colleagues or subordinates, or even occasionally in themselves, before they evolve into serious CI or security problems. Effective follow-through once problems have been spotted is imperative in the form of active and well-staffed medical support for troubled employees. It is especially important to make such services available to employees who identify their own problems and come forward to seek support voluntarily. (b)(3)(n)

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The Intelligence Community recoils every time a spy is caught. Laws have been broken, national security has been breached, and the bond among patriotic professionals has been violated. It would be consoling if the capture of major spies in recent years and the end of the Cold War signaled a downward trend in espionage. But the impetus to spy grows out of the human psyche, and personality dysfunctions, personal crises, and opportunities to serve other masters will never vanish. Under-standing the elements of espionage is critical to remaining vigilant and safeguarding the vital mission of US intelligence. (U)

Understanding Case Studies: Every person is complex, and most personalities include contradictory features. A good psychological ease summary is based on information and careful judgments regarding what constitutes the dominant, rather than incidental, features of the personality under study. Hitler, for example, was known to be very kind to children and animals, but his lack of remorse—even pride—in murdering countless millions of people dramatically overshadowed other aspects of his personality. The ease studies presented in this article focus on the patterns of behavior that illustrate the essence of the personalities of the various spies. Such synopses do not imply that there were no other interesting or even redeeming features in their personalities or conduct, merely that the latter were secondary to the primary patterns that drove them. (U)

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14 All three types of personalities described in this article are distinguished by active fantasy lives,
14 All times types of personances described in this article are distinguished by destrict mostly
but the fantasies tend to differ in both content and degree. Psychopaths tend to fantasize mostly
about power, pain, and control, while narcissists focus on their personal superiority and the
hostility provoked by those who do not notice it. The fantasy life of immature persons is frequently
much less well defined. Because their reasoning, judgment, and self-control are underdeveloped,
they are less tied to factual reality and more dependent on fantasy to cope with events and maintain
stability than are mature adults. (U)

17 "Ames on the Inside," CNN Interview, with Wolf Blitzer and Bob Franken, 27 December 1994. (U)

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21 "Ames on the Inside," CNN Interview, with Wolf Blitzer and Bob Franken, 27 December 1994. (U)

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